

SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE

SARL NEWS SUNDAY 01 AUGUST 2004

You are listening to Amateur Radio Station ZS6SRL of the South African Radio League, the National society for Amateur Radio in South Africa, with a news bulletin that is broadcast every Sunday at 08:15 Central Africa Time (CAT) in Afrikaans and at 08:30 CAT in English.

This bulletin is also available on the website of the SARL at www.sarl.org.za, on packet bulletin boards and on echolink. Echolink users can click on to ZS6FCS and they are invited to relay the bulletin on their local repeaters.

Queries on how to obtain and use Echolink or reports, comments or suggestions from echolink users will be appreciated. They can send an e-mail to: zs6fcs@telkomsa.net.

In the news today

SARL HF PHONE CONTEST TODAY

RADIO AMATEUR DATABASE

CALLS TO ESTABLISH A DEFENCE OF AMATEUR RADIO FUND

Stay tuned for more detail on these and other news items.

Visit the SARL Web site or call the SARL office which is open on weekdays from 09:00 to 13:00 at 011 675 2393 for details on how to join, book sales and all related amateur radio activities.

SARL NEWS invites clubs and individuals to submit news items of interest to amateurs on the web site of the SARL, which is www.sarl.org.za/newsinbox.asp not later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date. It would be appreciated if you could do it in both Afrikaans and English.

You are listening to ZS6SRL.

The news follows in detail.

SARL HF PHONE CONTEST TODAY

The 2004 SARL HF Phone contest takes place this afternoon starting from 14:30 and ending at 18:30 CAT. Phone activity will take place in the band segments 14,125 to 14,175 MHz; 7,040 to 7,080 MHz and 3,600 to 3,650 MHz. Please remember there are other band users. The rules can be found on the SARL website at www.sarl.org.za and were also sent out with HF Happenings 106. Contest logs must be sent to Dennis Green, ZS4BS, PO Box 12 104, Brandhof, 9324 or by e-mail to zs4bs@netactive.co.za. Do not send your logs to the NARC.

RADIO AMATEUR DATABASE

The question is often asked: How many amateurs are there in the country? And then all we can do is speculate because we don't really know.

To answer this question, the SARL persuaded ICASA to supply them with their database. They were reluctant at first because it contains confidential information, but an extract from the database was made and was supplied to the SARL. This extract does not contain any confidential data.

Louis van Heerden, ZS1LVH, had once done a survey of Div 1 calls and volunteered to go through the SARL database, and compare it with the data from ICASA. Louis has made considerable progress but needs help from individual amateurs and clubs around the country.

I quote from a packet message that Louis sent out: "Do you know that if you change your address (postal or otherwise) you need to inform ICASA? With regard to this there are some 834 listings on the database that have conflicting information. Unless I receive information to the contrary I will be forced to adopt the ICASA information. There are also some 663 entries on the SARL database that are not listed with ICASA. Most of these are SK's or cancelled licences. These will be removed from the present SARL database. It should be remembered that any call of a SK is frozen for 5 years and will not be re-issued during that time, without the permission of the family, so none of these will be available to new ZS's or ZR's."

There are still many clubs that have not reacted to Louis's call for information. Please send Louis your club databases because one can probably assume that they will be correct. Contact Louis at zs1lvh@absamail.co.za or on packet.

SARL HAMFEST UPDATE

Who says that home construction is dead? At the SARL Hamfest to be held at the National Amateur Radio Centre on 21 August visitors will be finding out for themselves how much home construction takes place in South Africa and how they can get involved in this aspect of amateur radio. Some of the home constructors even have a daily net to talk about their projects and offer each other assistance

Alan Franszen, ZS6BIK has arranged a number of speakers to talk about and demonstrate their construction projects.

To receive regular email updates about the SARL Hamfest and full details of the three-stream lecture programme send an email to rta@sarl.org.za.

CALLS TO ESTABLISH A DEFENCE OF AMATEUR RADIO FUND

At AMSATCON 2004 held at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Saturday last week, calls were made for the establishment of a Defence for Amateur Radio fund. This followed on a presentation on the threats of PLC on amateur radio and how it can ultimately also detrimentally affect VHF weak signal communication and satellites.

The presentation by Hans, ZS6AKV included an ARRL video which clearly demonstrates the interference PLC can cause on HF and VHF frequencies. Ar-

rangements are being made to make the video available from the SARL and SA AMSAT websites.

The President of the SARL Graham Hartlett, ZS6GJH said that while the SARL is not against progress or PLC as a system of carrying information, the SARL is very concerned about the effects of PLC on Amateur Radio and will remain vigilant and continue to engage ICASA and various other groups to ensure that Amateur Radio is not compromised. He said that the proposal to start a defence fund is sound as the SARL is likely to have to incur costs in the process. He said that it will be discussed at the next SARL Council teleconference and an announcement will be made shortly.

Amateurs are encouraged to report any unusual interference that spreads over a wide spectrum of frequencies. Send as much detail as possible to plc@sarl.org.za. This becomes particularly important as several companies are targeting metro councils to pilot projects in an effort to gain sufficient data to have PLC licensed by ICASA. The SARL needs all the information that can be gathered. Also watch the local press for any PLC or BPL news items and send details to plc@sarl.org.za. BPL is the term the US is using for Power Line Communication.

10 METER REPEATER FOR SOUTH AFRICA

Johan Lehmann, ZR6ANF, reported that a 10 meter FM repeater has gone operational in Pretoria under the banner of the Pretoria Amateur Radio Club. The repeater's output frequency is 29,690 MHz and the input frequency is 29,590 MHz. The repeater's receiver is currently not equipped with any CTCSS to enable as many as possible amateurs to make use of this repeater during the trial period. At the end of the trial period an 88,5 Hz tone will be required to access the repeater. The tone is a requirement of the IARU for all 10 meter repeaters world wide. The repeater will move to various sites during the trial period to determine the optimal location. Signal reports will be welcomed and users can send reports to Johan, email zr6anf@qsl.net or packet to zr6anf@zs0dld.

THE WORKS-EXPEDITION TO MARION ISLAND ZS8MI

Bushy, ZS6M, the QSL manager of the ZS8MI expedition reported to SARL News that the works-expedition to Marion Island by Ludwig ZS6WLC and Pieter ZR6FSR has produced the following results. As mentioned it was a works-expedition which took up most of their time, but fortunately it was still possible for them to make contact with a couple of amateur radio stations from around the world. For many of these stations it was a first opportunity to make contact with Marion Island ZS8MI.

They made 2 084 contacts of which 2 035 were DX contacts which included 182 CW contacts. 49 contacts were made onboard the SA Aghulas, en-route to Marion Island.

The QSL cards are at the printers and completion is expected by the end of July. It was a great effort from Ludwig and Pieter and plans for next years works expedition is already in place.

SPECIAL EVENT STATIONS DURING AUGUST

The Adventure Radio Club of Cape Town will field two special event stations during August.

The Club will participate in the annual Lighthouse Activity Weekend from Friday 20 August 2004 to Sunday 22 August 2004, when the Cape Columbine lighthouse near Paternoster on the West Coast, will be activated.

The following weekend, the Adventure Radio Club will operate from the Latsky Radio Museum in Vanrhynsdorp from Friday 27 August 2004 to Sunday 29 August 2004. The museum owner and curator, George Latsky, will be interviewed on the air with live SSTV images of the proceedings and the museum.

For more information contact the Adventure Radio Club at zs1arc@qsl.net and visit their website at www.qsl.net/zs1arc.

AMSAT ECHO

AO-51 (AMSAT-Echo) was turned on for general use in FM repeat mode on 30 July at about 02:15 UTC. This will be for a trial period of about three weeks during which the command stations will be watching the power budget and adjusting the UHF transmitter B power as needed for good management of the battery. Initially, the transmitter will be running at about 1 W. If power allows, it will be slowly increased during the trial period. We will also be adjusting settings on the satellite, so if the signal changes slightly from time to time, do not be alarmed. The TXB transmitter will be on 435,300 MHz, which is also a trial frequency. The original frequency of 435,225 MHz is now in regular use by GO-32, so the alternate is being tested to see if it can be used long term.

To work Echo in this mode you need the following information: Uplink: 145,920 MHz FM voice with 67 Hz PL. Downlink: 435,300 MHz FM voice.

The downlink transmitter will come on when it hears an uplink signal with a 67 Hz PL tone for about 1 second. It stays on for 10 seconds after that signal goes away. This operation is just like a terrestrial FM repeater with a 1 second kerchunk filter and a 10 second hang time.

The command stations will be watching the AMSAT-BB email reflector for reports on how Echo is working. Please post your results there. We are most interested in hearing about how well Echo hears you and how well you hear it.

BOOTSALE

The West Rand Amateur Radio Club will host a bootsale on Saturday 4th September at 12:00 SAST. The venue will be the WRARC clubhouse in Kroton street, Weltevredenpark. Please note that due to popular demand the gates will open at 12:00. For more information please contact Dave, ZR6AOC, on 083 449 8991. We are looking forward to seeing you and your friends there.

PROPAGATION REPORT

Over the past 10 days, propagation conditions has provided some of the most unexpected and exciting conditions ever. These conditions have once again proved that there is an element of surprise in DX. Even though we are experiencing a downward trend, we must never accept that the band conditions will be poor. The exceptional rise in the sun spot numbers from 13 July to an extraordinary high on 20 July was probably unexpected - with associated excellent DX activity. Since then everything has started to stabilise to a sun spot count of 50,8 on Friday. An inflow of corona mass may take place on 30 July as a result of an large opening in the southern hemisphere of the sun. Propagation conditions may improve considerably. Propagation models indicate that conditions to the East will be good on 20 metres between 15:00 and 18:30, even on 15 meters there may be openings somewhat earlier. Conditions on the long path to the USA seem to be very poor.

DIARY OF EVENTS AND REMINDERS

Today 1 August: SARL HF Phone Contest, 14:30 to 18:30; 7 August: Magalies Radio Amateur Club commences RAE course; the AGM of the North West Amateur Radio Club at the Klerksdorp Recreation Centre at 14:00 14 August: Div 6 VHF/UHF Work group meeting; 21 August: Radio Technology in Action and Hamfest at the NARC; 29 August SARL HF CW Contest 4 September: West Rand Amateur Club to hold a boot sale; 2 October: Flea Market at the East Rand Radio Club; Pay SARL membership, fees; Contribute to the fund initiated by the SA Amateur Radio Development Trust for the SARL's IARU membership; Send articles for Radio ZS to radiozs@sarl.org.za; Visually impaired hams contact Dave, ZS1LDH, on 021-761-8386 or email Dave, care of the Cape Town Amateur Radio Centre on zs1ct@qsl.net regarding receiving Radio ZS on tape. Email SARL history to zs6p@iafrica.com.

The SARL invites you to listen to Amateur Radio Mirror International on 17 815, 9 750, and 7 082 kHz and 145,625 MHz in East London, 145,650 in Durban 145,750 MHz in Pretoria and 438,800 in the Sandton area. A repeat broadcast can be heard on Mondays at 21:00 CAT on 3 215 kHz.

Telkom and Sentech sponsor ARMI.

This then brings us to the end of today's bulletin, which was compiled by Gustav, ZS6BWN, and read byfrom..... as a service to radio amateurs, short wave listeners and electronic enthusiasts.

You have been listening to ZS6SRL and thank you for having joined us. Also many thanks to those persons who supply news for our bulletins and the amateurs who relay the bulletins so regularly.

Goodbye everyone.

/EX